

RECLAMATION

Managing Water in the West

PRO-FONSI-05-001

FINDING OF NO SIGNIFICANT IMPACT

**Safety of Dams Modifications
and
Bridge Reconstruction
Scofield Dam
Scofield Project
Carbon County, Utah**

United States Department of the Interior
Bureau of Reclamation
Upper Colorado Region
Provo Area Office
Provo, Utah

Recommended by:

Beverley C. Heffernan 12/5/05
Beverley C. Heffernan Date
Chief, Environmental Group

Concur:

Kerry Schwartz DEC 8 2005
Kerry Schwartz Date
Manager, Water and Environmental Resources Division

Approved by:

Bruce C. Barrett DEC 8 2005
Bruce C. Barrett Date
Area Manager, Provo Area Office

FINDING

The Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation) has determined that implementing the proposed Spillway Replacement Alternative of the Safety of Dams (SOD) Modifications and Bridge Reconstruction, Scofield Dam Final Environmental Assessment (EA) will not have a significant impact on the quality of the human environment and that an environmental impact statement is not required. This decision was based on a thorough review of the EA and public comments received on the draft EA. This decision is in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 (Public Law 91-90), as amended, and the Council on Environmental Quality Regulations for Implementing the Procedural Provisions of NEPA (40 CFR 1500-1508).

This Finding of No Significant Impact (FONSI) is limited in scope to Reclamation's actions as authorized by the Safety of Dams Act of 1978 (Public Law 95-578, as amended). The proposed action as analyzed in the EA also includes bridge reconstruction and roadwork to be funded by the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and implemented by the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT). The FHWA was a joint lead agency in preparing the EA, and UDOT participated as a cooperating agency. The FHWA intends to issue a separate FONSI related to the bridge and road components of the proposed action. If the FHWA and UDOT decide to implement their portion of the proposed action, this work would be combined with Reclamation's SOD project and the respective agencies' activities would be managed and coordinated as one construction project.

DECISION

Reclamation has decided to implement the Spillway Replacement Alternative as described in the EA. This prescribes a modification fix for Scofield Dam that will minimally affect normal operations, while protecting environmental aspects mentioned in Chapter 3 of the EA. (i.e. recreation; water resources; water quality; public safety, access, and transportation; visual quality; socioeconomics; cultural resources; paleontological resources; wetlands and vegetation, wildlife resources; threatened, endangered, candidate, and state sensitive species; land use; prime and unique farmland; pedestrians and bicyclists, air quality; noise; and construction impacts)

REASONS FOR THE DECISION

A finding of no significant impact is based on the following:

1. The proposed action will have no significant effect on such unique characteristics as cultural resources, wilderness areas, wetlands, and riparian areas.
2. The environmental effects of the proposed action are neither controversial nor do they involve unique or unknown risks.
3. The proposed action may affect, but is not likely to adversely affect, species either currently listed or proposed for listing as candidate, endangered or threatened species, and will not affect designated critical habitat for these species.

4. The proposed action does not threaten to violate a Federal, State or local law or requirements imposed for protection of the environment.

Reclamation has analyzed the environmental effects, public comments, and the alternatives in detail. Reclamation believes that the Spillway Replacement Alternative best meets the purpose and need described in the EA.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

Reclamation began public involvement activities for the proposed action by initiating public scoping on March 23, 2005. In addition to a scoping letter sent to about 75 municipalities, organizations, agencies and individuals requesting comments, press releases were issued announcing the proposed project. No scoping comments were received during the public scoping period, which ended on April 15, 2005. Reclamation worked with the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) and the Utah Department of Transportation (UDOT) throughout the NEPA compliance process, under the terms of a Memorandum of Understanding among the three agencies. In October 2005, Reclamation mailed about 75 copies of the draft EA to the interested public for review and comment. Reclamation received two written responses, one from the State of Utah's Resource Development Coordinating Committee and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. These letters are included in the EA under Appendix C, documents 6 and 7 respectively.

After evaluating the public comments, Reclamation made several minor revisions to the EA. The project file in the Provo Area Office contains the comment letters as well as a complete description of all public involvement activities.

SUMMARY OF ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACTS

The expected environmental impacts of the Spillway Replacement Alternative are described in Chapter 3 of the EA. The environmental analysis in that document is based on the fact that work would occur within the dam primary jurisdiction zone. The environmental analysis focused on the resources mentioned above. The environmental analysis indicates that the impacts will be temporary, short term, and minor.

ENVIRONMENTAL COMMITMENTS

Reclamation will carry out the environmental commitments associated with the proposed action, as described in Chapter 4 of the EA. Those commitments have been incorporated by reference into this decision, and completion of the commitments will be closely monitored by Reclamation. Monitoring will also ensure completion of any and all mitigation requirements in construction contract specifications, as appropriate.